

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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SUBJECT: TURKS AND CIACOS RELATIONS WITH HAITI AND US

REF: ISHAM/HEAVNER LETTER MAY 31, 1977

1. TURKS AND CIACOS ISLANDS CHIEF MINISTER J. A. G. S. MCCARTNEY ACCOMPANIED BY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND UTILITIES LEWIS ASTWOOD VISITED HAITI FROM AUGUST 29 TO SEPTEMBER 3. THEY HAD BEEN PROMISED A MEETING WITH HAITIAN PRESIDENT JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER ON AUGUST 31, WHICH CANCELLED AT LAST MINUTE BECAUSE OF PRESIDENT'S ILLNESS (WE UNDERSTAND PRESIDENT SUFFERED FROM "FLU" FOR A FEW DAYS LAST WEEK). BRITISH HONORARY CONSUL WAS HARD-PRESSED TO CONVINCE MCCARTNEY AND ASTWOOD THAT THEY HAD NOT BEEN SLIGHTED, BUT THEY WERE RECEIVED BY INTERIOR MINISTER JEANTY AND PROMISED A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT DUVALIER AT A LATER DATE.

2. ALTHOUGH THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THEIR VISIT WAS TO ESTABLISH DIRECT DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS WITH THEIR HAITIAN
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NEIGHBORS, MCCARTNEY AND ASTWOOD DID VISIT THEIR JAILED COMPATRIOT, JACQUES RIGBY, WHO HAS BEEN HELD BY HAITIAN AUTHORITIES SINCE LAST APRIL ON CHARGES OF SUMUGGLING MARIJUANA. THEY ALSO MET WITH GRENADAN CITIZEN CHRISTOPHER CELESTIN WHOSE TRIAL ON SIMILAR CHARGES IS STILL PENDING IN THE CRIMINAL ASSIZES. BOTH APPEAR TO BE BEING WELL-TREATED WHILE HELD IN THE HAITIAN PENITENTIARY.

3. DURNING A CALL AT EMBASSY, MCCARTNEY AND ASTWOOD SPOKE WITH POLITICAL OFFICER ABOUT THEIR HOPES FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH THE U.S. BOTH ARE GOING TO BE IN WASHINGTON DURNING THE NEXT TWO MONTHS AND WOULD APPRECIATE OPPORTUNITY FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH APPROPRIATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS. THEY ARE ALSO STILL LOOKING FORWARD TO VISIT BY A STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TO GRAND TURK. THERE ARE THREE PRINCIPAL SUBJECTS OF CONCERN TO MCCARTNEY AND HIS COLLEAGUES:

A) BASE NEGOTIATIONS. THE TURKS AND CAICOS GOVERNMENT NOW HAS AGREEMENT FROM THE BRITISH TO PARTICIPATE IN NEGOTIATIONS BEGINNING IN WASHINGTON ABOUT OCTOBER 26 FOR CONTINUED USE OF US MILITARY FACILITIES IN THE TURKS AND CAICOS. MCCARTNEY SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE REPRESENTED BY HIMSELF, DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER D. O. SKIPPINGS, ASTWOOD AND DR. WILLIAM HERBERT, A ST. KITTS ATTORNEY. THEIR CONCERNS REMAIN THE SAME AS OUTLINED IN MEMCON TRANSMITTED BY REFERENCED LETTER.

B) TEMPORARY LABOR PERMITS. THE TURKS AND CAICOS WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A QUOTA TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM WHICH IMPORTS SEASONAL WORKERS FROM THE CARIBBEAN TO HARVEST CROPS IN FLORIDA AND SOUTHERN U.S. UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE ISLANDS IS SEVERE AND EVEN PARTICIPATION BY 50 TO 100 WORKERS WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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C) VISAS PROBLEMS. TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDERS NOW BENEFIT FROM A VISA WAIVER TRANSITTING MIAMI FOR OTHER DESTINATIONS, SUCH AS JAMAICA, BUT OFTEN HAVE DIFFICULTIES OBTAINING VISA FOR RETURN TRIP WHICH MUST ALSO USUALLY BE MADE VIA MIAMI. THEY WOULD LIKE TO EXPLORE WAYS OF IMPROVING VISA SERVICES (ESPECIALLY WAIVERS) AVAILABLE TO ISLANDERS.

4. MCCARTNEY PLANS TO BE IN WASHINGTON SEPTEMBER 10-30 FOR A PARLIAMINTARY CONFERENCE SPONSORED BY BRITISH EMBASSY. ASTWOOD AND SKIPPINGS WILL BE PASSING THROUGH WASHINGTON TO AND FROM CANADA IN EARLY OCTOBER. MCCARTNEY, AT LEAST, WILL PROBABLY CONTACT ARA/CAR FOR ADVICE ON DISCUSSING CONCERNS OUTLINED ABOVE. JONES

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